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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 002808

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN JASON MACK

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY REQUESTS INVESTIGATION INTO
SHOOTING OF COSTA RICAN NATIONAL

1. On Thursday, December 8, post received a letter from the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry regarding the December 7 shooting death of Costa Rica-born Rigoberto Alpizar in Miami International Airport. Alpizar reportedly is a dual U.S. and Costa Rican national.

2. Translated text of the letter follows. Begin text:

San Jose, December 8, 2005
DVM 219-05

Excellency,

I have the honor to address Your Excellency to refer to the death of a Costa Rican citizen, Rigoberto Alpizar-Medina, who passed away yesterday in Miami, Florida, as a consequence of an action by the security staff assigned to the city's international airport.

This event has caused grief to the Costa Rican public; on behalf of the Government of the Republic, I request, Excellency, official information on the circumstances of the tragedy. Likewise, the Government of Costa Rica expects that the proper procedures will take place to establish what happened and to assign responsibilities.

I thank you for Your Excellency's attention to this note, and avail myself of this opportunity to renew the assurances of my distinguished consideration and esteem.

//signed//
Marco Vinicio Vargas Pereira
Minister a.i.

His Excellency Mark Langdale
Ambassador of the United States
San Jose

End text.

3. The shooting featured prominently in all local media, including front-page coverage in four of the five national daily newspapers. Costa Rican press has been objective in its coverage of the shooting, so far sticking to reported facts and interviews with family members resident in southern Costa Rica. Post will continue to monitor local media for editorial and/or critical commentary on the event.

4. Late Thursday morning, President Abel Pacheco, a psychiatrist by training, was quoted on the Web site of the leading daily newspaper, La Nacion, as saying he would seek an investigation into Alpizar's death. He is quoted as saying that Alpizar's death could be attributed to "collective paranoia" in the United States.
LANGDALE